



AXMEDIS Full Call Text, draft

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A COMPETITIVE CALL FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECT PARTNERS

The following project currently active in the *Sixth Framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities contributing to the creation of the European research area and to innovation (2002-2006)* requires the participation of new project partners to carry out certain tasks within the project.

Project contract number - 511299

Project acronym - AXMEDIS

Project full name - Automating Production of Cross Media Content for Multi-channel Distribution

Instrument type –Integrated project

Summary of tasks requested

The AXMEDIS integrated project is to create the AXMEDIS framework to meet major challenges and needs of the digital-content market. Currently, the digital-content market is urging better pricing and value-for-money for industry products and services. The containment of sale prices is a vital key when setting up a sustainable business venture in the digital cross media content. AXMEDIS solutions will enable the production processes to be faster and cheaper, providing at the same time new capabilities to support safer distribution and multi-channel interoperability.

AXMEDIS aims to meet the challenges of market demand by: (i) reducing costs for content production and management by applying composition, parallel processing, optimisation techniques for content formatting and representation (format) and workflow control; (ii) reducing distribution and aggregation costs in order to increase accessibility with a Peer-to-Peer platform at Business-to-Business level, which can integrate content management systems and workflows; (iii) providing new methods and tools for innovative, flexible and interoperable Digital Rights Management (DRM), including the exploitation of MPEG-21 and overcoming its limitations, and supporting different business and transactions models.

AXMEDIS realises a set of tools and solutions to be used as components to set up and renovate processes and factories, organised by the leading distributor AXMEDIS existing partners. AXMEDIS demonstrators are to focus upon tools for: (i) content production and B2B distribution; (ii) content production and distribution to end-users via different channels including mobile, satellite data broadcast, interactive TV (i-TV), personal computer (PC), kiosks, PDA and others.

Additional demonstrators will be the associated sub-projects launched as take up actions to be selected with this competitive call. This call is addressed to organisations interested in developing real solutions by exploiting AXMEDIS technologies: one of its key objectives is the adoption of the AXMEDIS framework and technology in real-life scenarios. Proposers are required to show that their core activities are already facing the issues related to cross media content production and/or distribution while proposals should highlight how the current quality, efficiency and effectiveness of their activities could be substantially enhanced by the adoption of the AXMEDIS technology.

The selected sub-projects will join the AXMEDIS project to:

- enhance the applications areas and/or functionalities of the AXMEDIS framework;
- allow the integration and/or the exploitation of the AXMEDIS framework in the value chain of different object types;
- exploit and extend the AXMEDIS framework in supporting additional processes and/or players or new distribution channels not covered by the AXMEDIS project (see above).

The candidate topic areas of this call include the followings application and/or extension of the AXMEDIS framework and tools to support:

- one or more distribution channels such as mobile distribution, IPTV, DVB-S, DTT, DVB-T, DVB-H, and DTV, with smart cards, etc., in order to make evident interoperability of content and tools with other AXMEDIS distribution channels and tools (mobile devices, PC, STB, portable video player, portable music player, etc.); **mobile distribution** is one of the interested topics even if this channel is already addressed in AXMEDIS;
- massive and/or coordinated production, aggregation, protection, of cross media content; collaboration among different actors of the production and distribution value chain; collaborations among cultural institutions, etc.; video and music based solutions are interested even if those content types are already addressed in AXMEDIS;
- production and/or distribution authoring tools and/or players in relationships of content types not presently covered by AXMEDIS such as MHP, e-government content, health care content.

Proposal shall cover at least one of these topic and the **presence of a mobile distributor will be strongly appreciated.**

AXMEDIS consortium will support the new partners of the take-up actions with dedicated technical and training activities on AXMEDIS and with related technologies.

Proposals assessment will be based on (i) S&T excellence, (ii) quality of the consortium and (iii) mobilisation of resources.

AXMEDIS Project introduction

Digital-content market is urging better pricing and value-for-money for industry products and services. This is clearly evident in the recent price reductions by major companies in the sector. The containment of sale prices is a vital key when setting up a viable and sustainable business venture in the digital cross media content. Possible solutions to this challenge could be found by automating, accelerating and restructuring production processes, and providing solution to the content protection. Such solutions will enable the production processes to be faster and cheaper, while at the same time providing new capabilities to support safer distribution and multi-channel interoperability.

AXMEDIS aims to meet the challenges of market demand by: (i) reducing costs for content production and management by applying composition, parallel processing, optimisation techniques for content formatting and representation (format) and workflow control; (ii) reducing distribution and aggregation costs in order to increase accessibility with a Peer-to-Peer (P2P) platform at Business-to-Business (B2B) level, which can integrate content management systems and workflows; (iii) providing new methods and tools for innovative, flexible and interoperable Digital Rights Management (DRM), including the exploitation of MPEG-21 and overcoming its limitations, and supporting different business and transactions models.

The AXMEDIS consortium (consisting of digital content producers, integrators, aggregators, and distributors; and also information technology companies and research groups) is to create the AXMEDIS framework to provide technologies, methods and tools to speed up and optimise content production, protection and distribution, for leisure, entertainment and digital content valorisation and exploitation in general for multi-channel distribution.

AXMEDIS organises and realises a set of tools and solutions to be used as components to set up and renovate processes and factories on content production, protection and distribution organised by the leading distributor partners. AXMEDIS demonstrators are to focus upon tools for: (i) content production and B2B distribution; (ii) content production and distribution to end-users via different channels including mobile, satellite data broadcast, interactive TV (i-TV), personal computer (PC), kiosks, PDA and others.

AXMEDIS will offer assistance and technical support to companies interested in using the AXMEDIS platform and adopting the AXMEDIS solutions. This support action will be provided through activities such as training, tutorial, consultancy, workshop, meetings, assessment and evaluation, dissemination and demonstration at conference and fairs. Furthermore, the AXMEDIS consortium will grant the sum of 1 million Euro to companies and research institutes interested in developing real solutions by exploiting AXMEDIS technologies (this is referred to as *take up actions*).

Additional demonstrators will be 3-4 associated sub-projects launched as take up actions to be selected with this competitive call. As already mentioned, the role of the demonstrations is to drive through their requirements several activities within the project including business modelling, content production and distribution. They are a key element for the validation of the developed AXMEDIS infrastructure and tools. Specific attention will be given on how the proposed sub-projects will contribute to the elements mentioned above.

AXMEDIS Call for Take-up Actions' objectives and role of new partners

One of the main objectives of this call is the **adoption of the AXMEDIS framework and technology in real-life scenarios**. Proposers submitting a take-up project, are required to show that their core activities are already facing the issues related to cross media content production and/or distribution. Proposals should highlight how the current quality, efficiency and effectiveness of their activities could be substantially enhanced by the adoption and integration of the AXMEDIS technology.

In light of this context, the selected proposals (sub-projects) will join the AXMEDIS project to:

- enhance the applications areas and/or functionalities of the AXMEDIS framework;
- allow the integration and/or the exploitation of the AXMEDIS framework in the value chain of different object types;
- exploit and extend the AXMEDIS framework in supporting additional processes and/or players or new distribution channels not covered by the AXMEDIS project (see above).

AXMEDIS expects the proposers to show their commitments and interests in developing real solutions by exploiting AXMEDIS technologies to support the impact creation, the increase awareness of AXMEDIS solutions thus accelerating their wider adoption, and also the introduction of content providers in the AXMEDIS consortium.

Take-up actions present proposers with new possibilities for obtaining early competitive advantage. New partners will be the core seed of the AXMEDIS user community gaining access to innovative technologies and to AXMEDIS potentialities to create:

- new markets,
- new business models and
- distribution openings.

This gives them the possibility to start services that could continue to be operative after the take-up conclusion. For each take-up the AXMEDIS consortium will establish a specific team thus creating a conducive environment for technology transfer from the project results to the new organizations involved: proposers will have the opportunity to be co-funded to participate in the latest developments in the field of the automating production of cross media content, to compare their experiences with high level organizations, to be supported with guidance in terms of technology deployment /transfer and training, with management, assessment and evaluation activities as well as with dissemination at conference and fairs.

Most of this support activity has been planned within the *WP6.3 – Supervision of take-up actions (management)* of AXMEDIS project.

Call topic areas and tasks requested

As above mentioned, take up projects should aim at developing real solutions by exploiting AXMEDIS technologies, they should start real sustainable activities by taking advantage of the AXMEDIS framework services and derived tools. They should provide evidence that AXMEDIS could be applied to for covering one or more environments and business models.

The candidate **topic areas** of this call include the followings application and/or extension of the AXMEDIS framework and tools to support:

- one or more distribution channels such as mobile distribution, IPTV, DVB-S, DTT, DVB-T, DVB-H, and DTV, with smart cards, etc., in order to make evident interoperability of content and tools with other AXMEDIS distribution channels and tools (mobile devices, PC, STB, portable video player, portable music player, etc.); **mobile distribution** is one of the interested topics even if this channel is already addressed in AXMEDIS;
- massive and/or coordinated production, aggregation, protection, of cross media content; collaboration among different actors of the production and distribution value chain; collaborations among cultural institutions, etc.; video and music based solutions are interested even if those content types are already addressed in AXMEDIS;
- production and/or distribution authoring tools and/or players in relationships of content types not presently covered by AXMEDIS such as MHP, e-government content, health care content.

Proposers must indicate which topic areas and demonstrations they consider to cover with the submitting proposal. Proposal shall cover at least one of these topic areas, proposers are asked to give their priorities. and the **presence of a mobile distributor will be strongly appreciated**.

The proposal partners should contribute with content for the validation of their solutions to be used also to validate and demonstrate other channels established by AXMEDIS consortium and take-up actions.

Proposals must demonstrate a sound analysis of current practice, identify a real business case and business needs for improvement, identify clearly the technical and business objectives of the improvement and plan for adoption of new AXMEDIS practices to achieve this.

The benefits of implementing the Take-up action must be measurable e.g. in terms of enhanced efficiency, reduced cost, improved quality, increased competitiveness, opening of new market and exploitation capabilities. Metrics must be specified at the outset and, to the extent possible, should include technological, business, organisational and operational performance parameters. Along with these metrics, the tools already implemented in the AXMEDIS project will be used for monitoring sub-project progress, including the quality of specified indicators of impact and performance.

The dissemination of results in terms of experience gained, lessons learned and technological and economic benefits, will be carried out in collaboration with the AXMEDIS consortium within the current on going and dedicated AXMEDIS Workpackage. AXMEDIS expects the new partners to participate actively in the AXMEDIS project meetings and activities of exploitation, integration and demonstration. AXMEDIS consortium will support the new partners of the take-up actions with dedicated training activities on AXMEDIS and related technologies.

The winning consortia are encouraged to work in close collaboration with the AXMEDIS consortium in order to exploit helpful synergies and accelerate the potential impact.

The selected Take up actions will be joined to the AXMEDIS contract as sub-WP of *WP12 – Take up Actions*.

Sub-projects would be organised in three different stages:

1. *First phase*, whose main aim is to provide a detailed specification about how the AXMEDIS framework and tools will be used and exploited with the objective of discovering best approaches in the sub-project according to its demonstration objectives and for applying AXMEDIS results.

2. *Second phase*, in which the impact of the adopted AXMEDIS technologies will be assessed by implementing and integrating the demonstrator in the companies practices and resulting business benefit.
3. *third phase*, in which the demonstration is performed and the results validated against the effective usage of AXMEDIS tools in the proposed solution.

Additional information

More information on AXMEDIS project, framework and tools are available both on the project website (www.axmedis.org) and through the link available in the specific section of the project website dedicated to this Competitive Call <http://www.axmedis.org/callfortakeup/call.html>

Please be aware that the *Consortium Agreement* is confidential and thus will only be made available upon request and after signing the Non-Disclosure Agreement, NDA (You can find all the necessary information in the Guide for Proposers – *Annex 5*)

Consortium composition

To be eligible the proposal must involve collaboration with a minimum of two partners. They must be legal entities established in at least two different Countries, of which at least one must be established in EU Member States. The role, competence, responsibilities and participations of the participants in the proposal must be clear, well defined, well balanced, complementary and coherent to the overall proposal.

Each proposal will be submitted by the consortium of partners through the leading partner (namely, the sub-project coordinator).

The existing AXMEDIS project partners could not be partners of those proposals they may not respond to this call and may not participate as proposers or subcontractors in proposals.

Partner Profile

The call is addressed to all the present and potential actors of the value chain related to the production and distribution of cross media content (content providers/producers, distributors/mediators, integrators, multimedia publishers, collecting societies, IT companies, research institute, etc).

Evaluation Criteria

Sub-project proposals will be evaluated according to the following main criteria defined by the EC Guidance note for competitive calls:

- 1 S&T excellence**
- 2 Quality of the proposers (*consortium*)**
- 3 Mobilisation of the resources**

Due to the focus of this call, the criteria will include the following aspects intended to be a common basis for proposals evaluation by the independent and impartial experts.

1 S&T excellence

- 1.1 Relevance to the objectives of AXMEDIS the extent to which:
 - the proposed sub-project addresses the AXMEDIS objectives and needs of the consortium
 - at least one of the candidate topic areas is covered by the proposal. (Valuable proposals also able to cover more than one topic areas are preferred in the evaluation)
 - the current state of the AXMEDIS technology will be enhanced by the proposed solutions
 - the AXMEDIS technology will be integrated in the proposed solutions
- 1.2 Potential impact the extent to which:

- the business relevance, strategic and commercial impact for the submitting consortium is well defined
 - the impact of the proposed solution on the market and on AXMEDIS broad diffusion
 - the contribution of the proposers ensures optimal use of the project results in relation to exploitation and has an impact on the competitiveness of the AXMEDIS results
 - the proposed sub-project contribute to enhance the application areas or functionalities of the AXMEDIS framework and to increase the take-up of AXMEDIS solution
- 1.3 Innovation the extent to which:
- the proposal suggests a business case characterised by high level of innovation as far as both product/services and business processes are concerned
 - the degree and quality of the extension of the AXMEDIS framework
- 1.4 Quality of the proposal's work plan and objectives the extent to which:
- the proposed work has clearly defined and well focused business targets to be achieved, appropriate business case and approach (quality of the approach proposed, in particular the appropriateness, clarity, consistency, efficiency and completeness of the proposed tasks)
 - the proposal identifies a real case that drives the take-up action and the choice is appropriate to drive the future exploitation
 - the submitted proposal provides information explaining how the results will be capable to create a sustainable business activity

2 Quality of the Consortium

The extent to which:

- the participants collectively constitute a consortium of high quality
- ability to cooperate with the AXMEDIS consortium, including fluency in English, communication skills and infrastructures and strong involvement and ability to stimulate relevant use of advanced, emerging technologies and services
- the participants are well-suited and committed to their tasks
- there is good complementarity between participants, their roles and functions within the consortium are clear and coherent to the overall proposal
- the profiles of the participants have been clearly described

3 Mobilisation of the resources

The extent to which:

- the sub-project mobilises the necessary resources (personnel, equipment, finance..) essential for success, included the resources not reflected in the budget (e.g. facilities, networks and in particular the expertise, skills and credibility of key personnel proposed)
- the resources are convincingly integrated to form a coherent proposal
- the proposed action is cost-effective in general

Submission of proposals

Submission Information	
Call Identifier	FP6-2006-IST-AXMEDIS
Language in which proposal should be submitted	English
Date of open of call	15 th February 2006
Date of close of call	Wednesday, 19th April 2006
Time of close of call	17h00 Florence/ Italy Time

Proposals should be submitted in English and according to the guidelines and forms set out in the Guide for Proposers available on the following Web page <http://www.axmedis.org/callfortakeup/call.html>

Only paper submissions will be accepted and the **postal address for submission is:**

Prof. Paolo Nesi, Ph.D.
Department of Systems and Informatics
Distributed Systems and Internet Technology Lab
University of Florence
Via S. Marta 3
50139 Firenze
Italy

The envelope containing your proposal should report as follows: “AXMEDIS Competitive Call”

Schedule and Resources

We plan to accept a maximum two sub-projects (for 12-18 months of work) for each of the sub mentioned topic areas, provided that proposals will be accepted only if valuable. We may accept less than the 3-4 expected successful proposals for this call, if submitted proposals would be no valuable. Valuable proposals that are also able to cover more than one topic areas are preferred in the evaluation.

The final number of successful proposals in the call or in each topic area is based on the merits of the submitted proposals and available budget.

The AXMEDIS Consortium will invite the promising/short-listed proposer(s) to further procedures – also interview if necessary – foreseen for the accession to the contract.

Expected duration of participation in project	
From	To
09/2006	02/2008

Estimated costs and funding for the tasks a maximum of 1-1.1 Meuro

Estimated costs and funding for the whole 3-4 tasks (take up actions)		
Activity Type	Estimated total costs (all new sub-projects together)	Commission funding percentage
Research costs	€200000	up to the 50%
Demonstration costs	€2857143	up to 35%
Training costs		
Consortium management costs		
Total Commission funding available	€1100000	

Web address for further information (call webpage) – www.axmedis.org - <http://www.axmedis.org/callfortakeup/call.html>

Email address for further information (Project coordinator) – Paolo Nesi, nesi@dsi.unifi.it, <http://www.dsi.unifi.it/~nesi/>